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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 27, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of the violence in Quetta following the killing of a local political leader dominated headlines in all newspapers on Tuesday. All newspapers front-paged reports that 'courts' set up by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in the restive Swat valley have started functioning despite "Prime Minister Gilani's assertion that they would not be allowed to function." Also highlighted were reports of a bomb blast in Dera Ismail Khan "killing at least six people." All newspapers prominently displayed remarks of Finance Adviser Tarin which stated "U.S. docked \$55 million from 'terror war' bill." All dailies also gave prominent coverage to Ambassador Patterson's donation of security equipment to Frontier Corps and nutritional biscuits to children at an IDP camp in Peshawar.

Most major dailies continued to run editorials on the deteriorating law and order situation in the Swat Valley and the taking over of Jamaatud Daawa headquarters by the government. The English daily, "Dawn," noted that "Muridke, with its pro-poor face, and Swat, with its uninhibited brutal militants, represent the two ends of the militancy spectrum in Pakistan. The tactics for uprooting the Jamaatud Daawa/Lashkar-i-Taiba in Punjab and the TTP in Swat must therefore necessarily be different." Another English daily, "The News," observed that "we need now to demonstrate that extremist groups do more harm than good. People need to see their true face. Until this is revealed, groups such as the JuD will continue to paint themselves as martyrs." The leading Urdu daily, "Jang," wrote: "This state of affairs not only shows complete failure of both the federal and provincial administrations, but also damaging Pakistan's image as a moderate and progressive Muslim state across the world. Thus, the government must find out a workable solution without delay, or else it will be too late." End Summary.

News Stories

"Violence Erupts After Shia Leader Killed In Quetta" "Daily Times"
(01/27)

"Violence erupted in Quetta on Monday after Shia Hazara leader Hussain Ali Yousafi was shot dead in an apparent act of sectarian violence for which a banned Sunni organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangavi accepted responsibility for the murder."

"Gilani Says Taliban Courts Unacceptable" "Daily Times" (01/27)

"A day after 43 officials were summoned to Taliban courts for opposing the group - Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said on

Monday that a parallel Taliban judiciary is unacceptable. 'We will not accept a policy like this,' Gilani told reporters after attending the inaugural session of a conference on medical education in Islamabad."

"TTP 'Courts' Work Despite PM's No" "The News" (01/27)

"Majority of the residents of the militant-infested areas of the restive Swat Valley have been turning to so-called Shariah courts set up by the Maulana Fazlullah-led Taliban for the settlement of their disputes.... However, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday made it clear that the government would not allow Taliban to run their own so-called courts in Swat.... These so-called courts are becoming busier every day as majority of the people have turned to them, which settle their disputes within days. The so-called Sharai Adalat (main court) is located in Peuchar where militant commanders, including Maulana Fazlullah, regularly attend the proceedings and decide cases."

"Taliban Won't Be Allowed To Impose Their Agenda" "Daily Times" (01/27)

"The government will not allow the Taliban to impose their political and ideological agenda on the people through the use of force, President Asif Ali Zardari said on Monday."

"Senators Call For Ending Military Action In Swat; We Have Limitations To Hit U.S. Drones: Rabbani" "The Nation" (01/27)

"Senators both from treasury and Opposition benches called for early conclusion of military operation in Swat and pulling out armed forces from the Valley.... Leader of the House Mian Raza Rabbani Rabbani informed the Senate that Pakistan has certain compulsions and limitations to hit down U.S. drones adding that strong protest has been lodged with the U.S. Ambassador on border violations of Pakistan following the installation of new government in U.S."

"ANP Admits Government Has Lost Its Writ In Swat" "Daily Times" (01/27)

"The NWFP government has lost its writ in the volatile Swat valley, the ruling ANP admitted in the Senate on Monday."

"Army Getting Jammers For Taliban Radio" "Daily Times" (01/27)

"Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Major General Athar Abbas on Monday said the military was acquiring the latest technology to jam the illegal radio transmissions of the Swat Taliban, a private TV channel reported."

"Heated Debate In NA Over Government's Swat Claims" (01/27)

"The government told the National Assembly on Monday it was 'moving forward' in its bloody anti-terror campaign in Swat valley, but the opposition and at least one member of an allied party disputed Interior Advisor Rehman Malik's optimistic picture. 'We are moving forward slowly and slowly,' Mr. Malik said after two opposition members pointed to possible threat to the lives of some parliamentarians and other political figures from the area."

"Militants In Swat Blow Up Another School" "Dawn" (01/27)

"Militants in Swat blew up another school and at least seven people were killed and several others injured as violence continued on Monday."

"Baitullah Asks Followers To 'Stop Attacks'" "Dawn" (01/27)

"The banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has asked its members to stop attacks on government installations, kidnapping for ransom, bank robbery and car snatching across the country. A statement purportedly issued by TTP Chief Baitullah Mehsud on Sunday."

"Six Killed As Sunni MPA Targeted In D.I. Khan Blast" "Daily Times" (01/27)

"Six persons were killed and 26 other injured when a remote-controlled bomb, apparently targeting a Sunni leader,

exploded in D.I. Khan's Circular Road area, police said on Monday."

"Taliban Kill 'U.S. Spy' In Miranshah" "Daily Times" (01/27)

"The Taliban in North Waziristan on Monday killed a local tribesman, accusing him for spying for the United States."

"U.S. Docked \$55 Million From 'Terror War' Bill: Tarin" "Dawn" (01/27)

"The United States withheld \$55 million under its reimbursement program for expenses incurred by Pakistan on the war on terror after U.S. auditors raised objections, Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance Shaukat Tarin said in Islamabad on Monday. 'The Pakistan government will re-submit a case for the release of the amount which has already been spent from its resources against the war on terror,' he said."

"United States Provides Security Equipment To The Frontier Corps" "The News," "The Nation", "Daily Times," "The Frontier Post," "Express," "Jang," "Ausaf," "Aaj Kal," and "Pakistan" (01/27)

"Anne W. Patterson, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, handed over \$1.5 million in security equipment to the Frontier Corps, including protective helmets, bullet-proof vests, communications, and office equipment to Major General Tariq Khan, Inspector General Frontier Corps at the Frontier Corps Training Center at Warsak on Monday."

"United States Provides Nutritional Biscuits To Children at Kacha Ghari IDP Camp" "Daily Times," "The Frontier Post" (01/27)

"Anne W. Patterson, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, handed over 32,400 packets of high nutrient biscuits to the Commission of Afghan Refugees to be distributed to families at the Kacha Ghari Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp on Monday."

"Obama Administration Asked To Re-Evaluate Drone Strike Policy" "Daily Times" (01/27)

"With an emerging consensus among foreign policy experts that FATA poses the greatest security challenge to the U.S. - a U.S.-based foreign policy research organisation has called on President Barack Obama's administration to re-evaluate its drone attacks policy for the Tribal Areas. A commission of experts for evaluating past American policy in FATA and its effectiveness should probe this issue in depth, says a report by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)."

Editorials/Op-eds

"No Easy Solution," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/27)

"Muridke, with its pro-poor face, and Swat, with its uninhibited, brutal militants, represent the two ends of the militancy spectrum in Pakistan. The tactics for uprooting the Jamaatud Dawa/Lashkar-i-Taiba in Punjab and the TTP in Swat must therefore necessarily be different.... Appeasing the TTP in Swat today virtually guarantees the militants will spread their tentacles further afield in Pakistan. The same goes for the Jamaatud Daawa. If the provincial and federal governments do not work together to ensure the group is shut down for good, in all likelihood it will re-emerge later in a new form."

"Rooting Out The JuD," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/27)

"Over the past eight years, the JuD has been able to paint itself in the minds of people as a group engaged in 'good' work. But all this cannot disguise the fact that the group also promotes extremist ideas; that suspicions lurk of its possible involvement in terrorist activities. What the authorities need to do is put the evidence that exists on this count before the people. We need now to demonstrate that extremist groups do more harm than good. People need to see their true face. Until this is revealed, groups such as the JuD will continue to paint themselves as martyrs, blaming Indian

and western pressure for the action against them."

"Both Federal And Provincial Governments Should Join Hands To Deal With Swat Situation," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (01/27)

"This state of affairs not only shows complete failure of both the federal and provincial administrations, but also damaging Pakistan's image as a moderate and progressive Muslim state across the world. Thus, the government must find out a workable solution without delay, or else it will be too late."

"Crackdown On Daawa," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/27)

"The latest measure inspires confidence in the government's determination to root out militancy from the country. Though the international community in general has been appreciative of our strategy to combat extremism, New Delhi, as befits its traditional stance, continues pointing fingers at Pakistan for not doing enough."

"Taking Control Of Markaz-i-Taiba," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (01/27)

"If the action of government taking over Markaz-i-Taiba was carried out just to appease America and India then this act cannot be praised. Lahore Division Commissioner himself said that he did not see any unlawful activity in the Markaz-i-Taiba.... If an organization with the name Lashkar-i-Taiba operates in Indian held Kashmir and helps Kashmiri Mujahideen then punishing Jamaatud Dawa for that is not prudent."

"Taking over offices of Jamaatud Daawa," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (01/27)

"Under Indian pressure, the Punjab government has taken control of office of Jamaatud Dawa and established police check post besides Jamaat office in Muridke. This all is happening under pressure from India which accused a welfare organization of involvement in Mumbai attacks."

"Swat Hit-List And Two-Finger Sign," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/27)

"The scene in Swat is depressing and it is all the more so because it is a warlord's two-finger sign in the face of our mighty army. Swat is the war that Pakistan will have to fight if it wants to survive. All other 'threats' are political red herrings."

"Menacing New Threat," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/27)

"The pity is that for so long the fanatical fringe, under the leadership of firebrand Maulvi Fazlullah, has been allowed to spread its message among the largely illiterate population through his illegal FM radio station, with the result that its ranks have swelled. That has made things so much harder for the government, that it no longer is able to exercise its writ over a large part of the valley. And the militant commanders have the guts to threaten with dire consequences those who they think have transgressed the limits imposed by the Sharia.... Can one hope that the challenge, which the menacing threat poses, would be met with firmness and a clear sense of purpose and the writ of the state squarely established?"

"Taliban court in Swat," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (01/27)

"Having a state within a state is tantamount to violation of Pakistani law. The establishment of unauthorized Sharia based courts by local Taliban, and on top of it the government and opposition resolve to use force against each other is dangerous."

"Swat: The Need For Talks And Reconciliation," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (01/27)

"We want to reiterate that Ulema could play important role in the efforts to rid Swat of the current bloodshed. Those Ulema, who are respected in religious circles, should open up the door to dialogue with Maulvi Fazlullah, Baitullah Mehsud and other Taliban leaders."

"Increasing Militancy; Establish Government Writ," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/27)

"The manner in which the Swat issue is being handled makes one feel that it is being treated as an internal provincial matter but sooner or later everyone will admit that this is a national issue as the way militancy is spreading shows that provincial borders or federal units do not matter to the militants...."

"Taliban's [Hit] List: An Attempt To Weaken Pakistan In The Name Of Islam," an editorial in the Lahore-based Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 5,000) (01/27)

"Prior to the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Lal Masjid's Ghazi Abdur Rashid and Maulana Abdul Aziz had also announced setting up similar Shariat Courts, and tried to enforce their concept of Shariat forcibly in the federal capital. Their attempt ended in a tragedy Pakistanis cannot forget. Setting up Shariat courts in Swat and summoning elected leaders and officials is tantamount to a direct confrontation with the state. The Taliban leadership should stop this enmity with Muslims in the name of religion."

"U.S. Policy Pertaining To Pakistan Won't Change," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/27)

"The track-record of Mr. Richard Holbrooke is stained. He played a critical role as Assistant Secretary of State in partition of the Christian-dominant area East Timor from Indonesia and remained active in the Muslim genocide in Bosnia during the Clinton era. Now, he is going to play an 'important' role in Pakistan and Afghanistan. If God forbids, Mr. Holbrooke seeks to repeat the same feat here in Pakistan, then only God can protect Pakistan."

"The Afghanistan Mess," an op-ed by Rasul Bakhsh Rais in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/27)

"Foreign benefactors and friends are a poor substitute for indigenous political and social forces in mediating conflict between old and new power elites and rival ethnic groups. Reviving the internal social and political energies of Afghanistan is crucial to preventing a return to chaos and civil disorder, which could wipe off the gains made so far. The Obama administration must act differently by focusing on national reconciliation within Afghanistan instead of using force against one particular ethnic or social group to the benefit of its rivals."

"How Holbrooke Will Succeed," an op-ed by Mosharraf Zaidi in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/27)

"Richard Holbrooke must understand that in Afghanistan and Pakistan 'engaging the elite' has been a miserable failure of a policy for Western powers. Over 200 years of engaging the elite here--generals, politicians, warlords, landlords and mullahs--has failed to produce the kind of emancipative democracy.... Engaging Pakistan's emerging urban middle class, its accountants, artists, historians, doctors, computer nerds, architects and, yes, without question, its lawyers, is the surest, straightest and most honest road out from under the rubble of FATA and towards success for the special representative."

"Holbrooke Special U.S. Envoy For Pak-Afghan," an op-ed by M. Ashraf Mirza in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/27)

"Mr. Obama should not be oblivious to the fact that withdrawal from Afghanistan will be the only solution to the Afghan imbroglio. And the United States will recognize it sooner than later like Iraq. If war is bad and unacceptable for Iraq, it's equally bad and

unacceptable for Afghanistan since both are sovereign countries and were invaded by the U.S. to impose its policy of pre-emption conceived by Bush's notorious Vice President Dick Cheney...."

"India's New Allegation: Change In Strategy Is Needed," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/27)

"Death threats to the Pakistani High Commissioner prove that not only is the Indian government involved in aggravating the situation, it has given a free hand to extremist Hindus also.... The government must devise a strategy to counter this situation, and the international community must also play a role in trying to rein India in."

"Threat By Extremist Hindu Outfit And Our Political Leadership's Insensitivity," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (01/27)

"Following Barack Obama's election, Indian-Americans had written a letter drawing his attention to the fact that groups like the RSS and Vishwa Hindu Parishad were involved in politics of hate against Christians and Muslims in several Indian states. The letter urged the new U.S. administration to help stop this [brand of politics]. Now this extremist trend has increased to the extent of threatening diplomats.... If India takes solid measures against these extremist outfits it will prove that the government has no links with them, otherwise the world will only blame India."

"Threats To The Pakistani High Commissioner And The New Indian Drama," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (01/27)

"Pakistan needs to present the evidence of RAW's involvement in terrorism in the tribal areas and Balochistan.... Moreover, Pakistan government should demand custody of those who gave death threats to Pakistani High Commissioner to India."

"Death Threats To Pakistani High Commissioner In India," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (01/27)

"Pakistan should immediately recall its High Commissioner and other diplomatic staff from New Delhi, as their lives are in danger. Moreover, this anticipated act will also help the international community understand the Hindu radical mindset, and the war-hysteria of the Indians."

"Threat To Envoy," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (01/27)

"The letter is a grim reminder that after the Mumbai killings the dust of conflict between India and Pakistan has still not settled. It is clear that the terrorist elements in India are encouraged by the Indian government's aggressive stance of directly blaming the government of Pakistan of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai.... India must not be influenced by the hydra of terrorism. Instead, the two countries must fight it jointly." Patterson